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ABSTRACT

This practicum report reports on a project to increase the number of minority preschool students referred for a gifted program. A teacher checklist was designed to assist in identifying potentially gifted minority students. Training sessions were held (for 28 teachers serving 519 4-year-old students) at preschool centers to increase teacher awareness of both the characteristics of potentially gifted minority students and the need to refer these students at the preschool level. A matrix was developed for the collection of various sources of information (the teacher checklist, a parent checklist, an evaluation of learning and thinking abilities, and a developmental evaluation) about the minority student. Among outcomes were an increase in number of minority students referred, a parent meeting which improved communication between the public school gifted education program and preschool program parents, and modifications of the preschool program. Appendixes include the teacher checklist, the parent checklist, and the matrix. (17 references) (DB)

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Developing An Appropriate Methodology to Identify Minority Students for the Gifted Program

by

Brenda Goza George

Cluster XL

A Practicum I Report presented to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1992

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Brenda Goza George under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

April 12, 1992
Date of Final Approval of Report

June Delano Ph.D
Dr. June Delano, Adviser

Acknowledgement

This is for my mother, Vera Goza, who passed away during the development of this practicum. She always stressed the responsibility to be fair to each and every one so they could have an equal opportunity to develop their potential. She would have been very proud to read this practicum. Even though it is only a beginning, for too long minorities have had little opportunity for participating in gifted programs.

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Abstract

Developing An Appropriate Methodology to Identify Minority Students for the Gifted Program. George, Brenda Goza, 1992. Practicum I Report, Nova University, ED.D. Management of Programs for Children and Youth. Descriptors: Preschool Gifted/ Identification of Minority Preschool Gifted/Matrix for Identifying Preschool Gifted/ Gifted Youth At Risk/Identification Economically Disadvantaged Gifted Preschool/ Identification African American Preschool Gifted/Identification ESOL Gifted Preschool/ Early Childhood Gifted Identification/Early Childhood Minority Gifted/ Early Childhood At Risk Gifted

The goal of this practicum was to increase the number of minority students referred for the gifted program. Three broad objectives were designed to achieve this goal: (1) to increase the number of minority students classroom teachers refer for the gifted program; (2) to develop a greater sensitivity among the teachers and staff to identify potentially gifted minority students; (3) to develop a matrix which can be used by gifted program teachers for referral of minority students to the gifted program.

During the three month practicum period a teacher checklist was designed for identifying potentially gifted minority students. Training sessions were held at preschool centers to increase teacher awareness of not only the characteristics of potentially gifted minority students but also the need to refer these students at the preschool level. A matrix was developed for the collection of various sources of information about the minority student. Included in the matrix was the teacher checklist, parent checklist, an evaluation for learning and thinking abilities, and a developmental evaluation. This matrix compared to standard referral procedures, provided a broader source of information, thus increasing the number of minority students referred.

The outcomes of the practicum were positive. In addition, the inclusion of the parent checklist in the matrix led to a parent meeting which brought about more open communication between the public school gifted education program and the preschool program parents. One serendipitous result was that many of the parents were surprised at the realization that their child demonstrated this potential for giftedness.

* * * * * *

Permission Statement

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Brenda Goza George
Signature

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

The writer is employed by a large suburban school district located near a metropolitan city. The community is in a highly populated area, making it the sixth largest school district in the state with a total Pre-Kindergarten through grade 12 population of 92,759 students. This places the school district in the top 25 percent of the largest school districts in the nation.

The school district has the same political boundary lines as the county, and is situated on a long thin peninsula. The distance from the north to the south is approximately 45 miles. The northern part of the school district has a large ethnic minority population, and there are several black communities located through out the county with a large concentration in the southern section. The district, which has been under court ordered busing rule for approximately 22 years spent approximately 7 millions dollars of its operating budget this past year to transport students in order to guarantee racial balance.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The work setting for the writer is in the district office within the Preschool Division of the Exceptional Education Department Programs for Gifted and Able Learners. The writer is a grant coordinator for a state funded grant in the gifted program, working with preschool programs both within the writer's district and in other school districts around the state. The advantage of working at the district

level is the writer is able to participate directly in the decision making process for program management and development.

The population involved in the grant includes four year old students at various Head Start sites or comparable preschool programs for minority students. Minority is defined as either one whose racial/ethnic background is other than white, non-hispanic, or one who has limited English proficiency, or someone who is from a low socio-economic status family.

In addition to grant coordination the writer works with the preschool programs to provide teacher training and parent workshops at school sites. Emphasis is placed on helping the teachers to increase their awareness of gifted children, and how to support and encourage their strengths. The parent workshops helps parents to become aware of the many resources within the community which are available for free or at very little cost to families, and accessible by public transportation.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The gifted education program student population was made up almost entirely of Caucasian students, and most of the students are from middle and upper-middle class families. The number of minorities previously identified for gifted programs was very small compared to their representation in the school wide population. Throughout the school district the number of minorities recommended for the gifted program by teachers and parents has also been very low.

A large portion of the minority population was from economically disadvantaged communities and they had not been exposed to the many opportunities utilized predominantly by middle and upper class families. These minority children had not been encouraged to be inquisitive about the world around them or to visit the library, nature park, science center or art museums. Most of these children came from families just trying to survive on a day to day basis. The world of education was simply an unknown to these families.

The identification of minority students for the gifted program needed to be redefined so that educators could at any early age identify those minority students who had the potential to qualify for the gifted program, and provide a better education plan for these students. Briefly stated, the number of minorities identified for the gifted program needed to be increased and early intervention was paramount.

Problem Documentation

The racial/ethnic student distribution (preK-12) for 1989 indicated 23.85% of the student enrollment in the state was black. The percentage of blacks in gifted programs statewide was only 5.35%.

In a State Department of Education report (1990), the percentage of blacks in the writer's school district was 17 .84% of the total school enrollment. The percentage enrolled in the gifted program was 3.05%. In a nearby school district of comparable size the percentage of blacks was 21.20% of the total school enrollment. The percentage of blacks enrolled in the gifted program was 3.84%.

In a recent interview with the state Bureau Chief of Exceptional Education there was a strong indication of support for efforts to increase the number of minorities in the gifted programs through out the state. He was very interested in looking at other indicators to identify gifted students, rather than relying solely on an intelligence test.

The state Supervisor for Gifted Programs in a recent interview was extremely concerned about the low number of minority students in gifted programs statewide. He was very open to ideas for addressing this problem and was supportive of gaining grant money, at both the state and federal levels, to implement various projects through out the state.

At the school district level both the Assistant Superintendent of Exceptional Education Programs and the Supervisor of Gifted Programs shared their concern for the low number of minorities in the gifted program, and their support for looking at new ideas to address this problem.

A recent newspaper article (1989) mentioned that black children are a rarity in gifted programs throughout the state, indicating the identification

procedure is obviously biased against minorities because gifted people are found in all portions of the general population.

Causative Analysis

It was the writer's belief there were two basic causes for the problem. First, the evaluation instruments used for gifted program placement did not include many of the strengths found in the minority population. Qualification was usually based on an intelligence test for placement, and the minority child had not been exposed to many of the situations in the majority culture that are the basis for the questions on an intelligence test. The identification procedure based on intelligence tests is weighted heavily against the minority population.

Minority children had not been exposed to the many resources in the community, such as the library, science centers, plays, and other cultural events. Most of these children lived in poverty. The overwhelming problem of meeting their basic needs had a higher priority. Many of these children lived in dysfunctional families and were not given individual time for developing language skills, i.e. conversation, reading to the child, and playing games and other activities.

The importance of education was not seen in the minority culture as a responsibility of the parent. For most minority families the overwhelming problems of basic survival took precedence over schooling. Education became something that was done in a building for away from home and was very foreign to their "real" world.

The minority child did not have a lot of role models in the neighborhood which supported reading and education in general. In fact, most minority children

and their families were very isolated in the community because of limited public transportation which would allow for their exposure to a different environment.

The second cause for a low minority gifted population was classroom teachers did not have sufficient training to know how to recognize potentially gifted minority students. It was easier to identify students that shared a similar background to the instructor and who were very successful in school. Many teachers have never visited their families from the minority population or had the opportunity to view the resourcefulness of minority students in their limited environments, which could serve as indicators of giftedness. In addition, the identification checklists provided to classroom teachers did not reflect the skills found in many minority cultures, and therefore students were never referred to the gifted program for further evaluation.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Many professionals in the field of gifted education have been concerned about the lack of minorities in gifted programs throughout the nation. The identification process has needed to be redefined to include other characteristics of giftedness that have been found in minority populations, Fraser (1989), Mitchell (1988), Stronge,et.al. (1987). Only a limited number of school districts included the minority student in gifted programs when the identification process was based on IQ and standardized test scores (Mitchell,1988).

The accepted procedure for identifying gifted students required the student to respond to experiences common to the dominant culture, not to experiences within the minority student's environment (Torrance,1969). One could relate to the total inappropriateness or validity of an evaluation in which the testee had no or very limited experience. The identification process tended to be the greatest road

block to increasing the number of minorities and low income students in gifted programs (Kitano and Kirby,1986).

Referring to R.J. Samuda's (Khatena,1982) concerns regarding the uses of psychometric approaches to the measurement of giftedness in minorities, i.e. unfair testing practices, test administrators were not aware of cultural diversities, and the use of instruments for selection and prediction rather than description and diagnosis.

Richert (1987) found there are three barriers to identifying minorities for placement into gifted programs. They are limited definitions of giftedness, confusion between the research and program purpose for identifying students, and identification procedures that oversimplify giftedness. These barriers could be found in many gifted programs.

All of these evaluation practices weigh heavily against an accurate evaluation of the minority student. The influx of various minorities in our society have contributed to the need for taking another look at some of the evaluation practices used through out education systems. One school district in particular had experienced large numbers of minorities entering the public school system on a weekly basis. Many of these children had never seen any type of commercial toy, i.e. blocks, plastic balls, picture cards. It then became very apparent that evaluating these students was quite difficult.

The literature revealed several causes for the low number of minorities placed in gifted programs: socioeconomic deprivation, social and geographical isolation, their perception of powerlessness and the identification practices in gifted programs (Baldwin, 1987). The poverty in approximately 48% of the black population has been an added barrier for potentially gifted minority children (Karnes and Johnson).

Characteristics of giftedness, such as a high verbal ability and a questioning attitude, was not supported in some of the various minorities. As an example, a common descriptor for children affected by cultural diversity was in the area of discipline. Their culture did not encourage an inner locus of control. Tradition dictated strict adherence to directions, and questioning was discouraged. In addition, when the environment dictated the need to survive, one did not consider esthetics when the surroundings were dangerous and untrusting (Baldwin, 1991).

The interrelations between three variables which are indicative of a child with unique needs were: cultural diversity (racial, ethnic, and language different from the dominant culture), socioeconomic deprivation, and geographical isolation. All contribute either individually or collectively to the acquisition of skills that provide for success in school (Baldwin,1991).

In an effort to increase the accuracy of referrals by professional personnel, inservice training should have been provided which emphasized an increased sensitivity to the minority population (Stronge, et.al.1987).

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

The following goals and outcomes were projected for this practicum:

Goals and Expectations

The goal of this writer is to increase the number of minority students referred for the gifted program. It is expected that the number of minorities recommended for further evaluation by the gifted program will increase.

Expected Outcomes

Outcome One

The classroom teachers will increase the number of minority students they refer for the gifted program.

Outcome Two

The teachers and professional staff will develop a greater sensitivity for the need to identify potentially gifted minority students.

Outcome Three

A matrix will be developed which can be used by gifted program teachers for the selection of minority students for the gifted program.

Measurement of Outcomes

Outcome one will be evaluated by comparing the number of minorities referred by classroom teachers during the practicum period with the number of minorities referred during the same time period the previous year. The number of minority students referred during the practicum period will be greater than one.

Outcome two will be evaluated by comparing the number of teachers and staff referring minority students during the practicum period with the number of teachers and staff referring students during the previous year. The number of teachers and staff referring students during the practicum period will be greater than one.

Outcome three will be evaluated by comparing the ratio of minority students who are referred for the gifted program based on the matrix with the ratio of minority students who are selected for the gifted program based on standard referral procedures. The number of students referred to the gifted program, based on the matrix, will be one half of those students of whom a matrix was completed.

Mechanism for Recording Unexpected Events

The writer will keep a log for recording events during the practicum. This will allow for documentation of any unexpected benefits, problems, or major crisis.

Description of Plans for Analyzing Results

The information will be analyzed by converting the data to a numerical score or stanine figure where ever possible. Judgements regarding the achievement of expected outcomes will be as follows: if the number of minority students referred by teachers is increased, if the number of teachers and staff referring minority students increases and if the number of students qualifying for referral to the gifted program is half of those students on whom a matrix was completed.

The data will be presented in charts and graphs.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

Since the problem was the number of minorities previously identified for gifted was very small when compared to their representation in the schoolwide population, the solution of the problem required a change in the method of evaluating these students. The literature suggested various types of evaluation instruments which did not rely so heavily on verbal abilities. Cohen (EC 90) recommended using multiple criteria and a combination of assessment instruments to provide a more accurate picture of the minority student. The Baldwin matrix (1991) for identifying students would also allow the inclusion of information about students from a different perspective as part of a matrix.

Measures advocated by Kitano and Kirby (1986) were as follows: The Torrance Test of Creative Thinking, Alpha Biographical Inventory, Leiter Intelligence Test, Meeker Structure of the Intellect (SOI) Learning Abilities Test, and The System of Multicultural Pluralistic Assessment (SOMPA). The Leiter, although designed for the hearing impaired, could be used for students with low or limited verbal skills from deprived backgrounds. Birch (1984) recommended the individual evaluation of preschoolers to identify potential giftedness and potential difficulties as a basis for individualized school programming.

Instruments used in a 1985 Head Start project in which the objective was to identify potentially gifted children were: Thinking Creatively in Action and Movement (TCAM) by Torrance; four subtests of the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (K-ABC): Magic Circle, Face Recognition, Gestalt Closure, and

Expressive Vocabulary; and the Self-Concept and Motivation Inventory (Karnes and Johnson, 1987).

According to Mitchell (1988, 164,165) another strategy to identify culturally different gifted children was comprised of a six step plan which included the following:

Step 1. Nomination by anyone, i.e. parents, students, peers, school staff

Step 2. Scored on IQ and or achievement tests at or above the 75th percentile, followed by a behavioral checklist to be completed by teachers.

Step 3. Add the points on the checklist.

Step 4. Chose 60 percent on the basis of the highest test percentiles; this was the first selection.

Step 5. Chose the second 25 percent on the basis of the highest scores on the behavioral checklist; this was the second selection

Step 6. The first 15 percent of the students were considered individually by a trained team who considered minority and/or handicapped students.

Kitano and Kirby (1986) recommended an awareness program as an inservice training for teachers and community liaison persons, i.e. social workers, day care workers and religious leaders from the minority community. This would help them to recognize characteristics and inform parents about available services. A teacher training component, to encourage teachers to promote some of the

characteristics usually identified with gifted children in their regular curriculum, would be appropriate.

In addition, other ideas to be explored would be to review the Program of Assessment, Diagnosis and Instruction (PADI) which was developed to identify students with hidden talents and provided intervention strategies to encourage successful achievement and/or participation in programs for the gifted (Gregory, et.al).

It would also be important to work with a communication disorders in a social context (Roberts and Crais, 1989). The purpose of this was to promote more pragmatic language experiences for minority students and to encourage confidence in their verbal and thinking skills, as the instructor works with the whole class.

One idea was to provide a family involvement component (Karnes and Johnson) in order to work with families to encourage many of the characteristics usually observed when identifying gifted children, i.e. creative skills, problem solving skills and leadership skills. This involvement could support families in an effort to empower them with the skills needed to help their child be successful in the formal education by taking advantage of the available materials in the library and other community resources.

Description of Selected Solution

The methodology selected was to develop a teacher checklist that would be helpful in identifying students thereby increasing the number of referrals, train teachers to identify potentially gifted students, and to develop a matrix to assist in this identification. The most challenging part of this practicum was to convince some educators there were gifted students in the minority population who have long been overlooked, and the identification and intervention strategies for these minority students must begin at an early age. These potentially gifted children did not have a lot of support systems in place. Educators must identify these children now in order to have future leaders, scientist, artist, mathematicians, writers from this segment of our population.

The development of a matrix which provided a wealth of information about the student at this early age had not heretofore been available. Such a matrix has helped to provide a better education plan for the student, has provided an opportunity to look at strengths and weaknesses, to develop intervention strategies for the deficit areas, and to build on the strengths of the student.

This project succeeded because it had the support of the administration of the school district, educators in both the private and public preschools within the district who were very committed to helping this project succeed, and the education department at the state level which believed in and supports the project.

The following solution strategy was selected:

The writer developed the initial checklist. The writer brought together a committee or task force to review some of the different evaluations mentioned in the literature for their appropriateness for the school district. The committee included a psychologist knowledgeable in the various evaluation instruments, a resource person in the early childhood and primary education department, and

early childhood professor at the local community college, the supervisor of gifted and able learners programs for the school district, and various staff in both private and public educational programs from the minority populations of our community.

The writer provided teacher training workshops in order to challenge teachers and staff in early childhood programs to become more aware of the characteristics of gifted minority children, and the need to look for these children in their classroom. The short "user friendly" checklist was introduced at the workshop, as well as examples of activities teachers could use to encourage students to express some of these behaviors. The checklist was made available to teachers and staff, with a request to complete the checklist on the students which they felt might be good candidates for the gifted program. The checklists were to be returned to the writer.

The completed checklists were to be reviewed and a student list would be developed for the pilot study. The students would then be evaluated from the checklists and assessment measures that demonstrated their skills and performance potential. The information collected was incorporated into a matrix developed for identifying minority students for referral to the gifted program.

Report of Action Taken

A summary of the actions taken in implementing the plans and strategies designed to accomplish the goals and objectives of the practicum was as follows:

Weeks 1-2

This time was devoted to the preparation of the teacher checklist (Appendix A) and scheduling the committee to review information for developing the matrix. The writer compared various teacher checklists presented in research materials for their appropriateness for the preschool population. Many of the current gifted

checklists were intimidating because of the use of education terms, vocabulary, and experiences that were common only for middle and upper class families. The information was consolidated and presented to different minority members of the educational community for their input and review. This was very valuable because the input allowed for developing a checklist more sensitive to the minority community. The checklist was only one page, using short sentences describing situations or characteristics relevant to minorities. The writer then presented the draft of the checklist to the department administrative staff for their input and received their approval. The checklist was then finalized and prepared for printing. (Appendix A)

A meeting was scheduled with the matrix committee to review some of the different evaluations mentioned in the literature review.

Week 3

This week included pulling together materials for teacher workshops, outlining the presentation, preparing handouts and making copies for overheads. A schedule of the teacher workshops was arranged with the site coordinators of the preschool.

The committee meeting was held to review the material for developing the collection of data for inclusion in the matrix. The various tests were reviewed for age, culture, and language appropriateness and a sensitivity to the minority community. Some of the measurements had to be administered by a psychologist, i.e., SOMPA, Leiter and Kaufman. It was not financially possible for the school district to provide a psychologist to evaluate these students within the time constraints of the practicum. The committee recommended the matrix be limited in the data collected for use this year, allowing for the option to include additional information in the future. The committee felt that it was very important to concentrate on training the teachers to use

the checklist appropriately and to include no more more than two other evaluation instruments for this school year.

Weeks 4-6

Two teacher workshops were presented to the larger preschool sites in the district. The staff members from the four other small preschools participating in this program were included in the workshops at the larger sites. This provided a better management of time. It also allowed the teachers from the smaller centers to participate with the larger centers as the initial checklist was presented. Examples of activities for teachers to use in the classroom to encourage students to express some of these behaviors were included. The activities were enthusiastically received by the teachers. The teachers expressed apprehension about recommending students who might not qualify for consideration in the gifted program. It was communicated to the staff that recommending too many students was better than overlooking anyone. Teachers were requested to turn in the checklist within three weeks. A schedule for picking up the checklist was arranged with each preschool center.

The committee meeting was held to review and select items to be included in the matrix. It was decided to utilize the teacher checklist also as a parent checklist for input from the family. It required only changing the title of the checklist from teacher checklist to parent checklist, and changing "student" to "child" on the form (Appendix B). The committee, wanting to use an instrument already in this district, selected the Structure of the Intellect Test for Learning and Thinking Skills to be administered to each student selected for the pilot project. The testing was administered by a professional outside of the classroom. This test was selected because it was not a language based evaluation instrument. The committee felt this would give a more accurate estimate of minority student's abilities and give information which would diagnosis any deficit areas in which

intervention strategies could be put in place in the classroom during the present school year. In addition, the Early Recognition Intervention Network (ERIN) Screening Instrument would be included in the matrix. The ERIN Screening was already in place at the preschools. The teachers were familiar with the ERIN Screening Instrument, which evaluates the developmental level of the student resulting in a numerical score. In conclusion, there were four items selected for the matrix: the teacher checklist, parent checklist, ERIN Screening and the SOI Test for Learning and Thinking. If any additional information became available on the individual student there was room for this as an option. For example, a sample of art work, a creative story dictated by the student to the teacher, or any other informal observations by the teacher or staff member.

Weeks 7 and 8

Week seven was devoted to collecting the checklists. The checklists were not all completed. Some of the teachers indicated their uncertainty about preparing the checklists for their students. After meeting with the teachers individually and reviewing the checklist the writer and the teacher working together completed a checklist on the students the teacher wanted to recommend.. The teachers were more comfortable and confident after this meeting. During week eight there was an emergency in the writer's family and this delayed picking up the checklists another week.

Week 9

The teacher checklists were all received during the week. The individual checklists were then converted to a numerical score.(Appendix C). A list of students was compiled from the checklists. Those students scoring sixty or above on the checklist became part of the student list for the project. There were a total of sixty-five students from six preschool centers.

Information about the gifted program was sent to parents of the selected students requesting they complete the parent checklist (Appendix B) on their child. It was emphasized the importance of getting this completed and returned as soon as possible.

Week 10

The process of collecting multiple sources of information for inclusion in the matrix began this week. The individual scores for the ERIN Screening was added to the matrix. Arrangements were made to begin the individual testing of the students as the signed permissions were returned.

Weeks 11-12

The parent checklist were slow to be returned. This became very time consuming because it required many phone calls and reminders to get the forms signed and returned to the schools. A meeting was scheduled with parents to share information about the gifted program and to answer any questions or concerns.

Weeks 13-14

The individual evaluation of students continued at each of the preschool centers and was completed by the end of this period. This required considerable effort on the part of the staff to help with the scheduling for individual testing of sixty five students. This had to be arranged around outside medical appointments which are a usual part of the preschool program with this population of students.

The parent meeting allowed for open communication between the public school gifted education program and the preschool program parents. The attendance rate was 11 percent. This is very low when compared to what could have been anticipated from a middle or upper class family. The preschool centers considered this to be high, from their past experience involving parent meetings. Information regarding the partnership between schools and parents, to provide a successful education program for their child,

was part of the parent meeting. At the conclusion of the meeting the families attending the meeting were invited to ride the bus to the public library where they were given a full tour and given the opportunity to apply for a library card. Several families took advantage of this and now have a library card. The public library is also accessible by public transportation, so these families will be able to return often to provide enrichment for their own child's education, as well as their own.

Week 15

The information collected on the students was compiled for the matrix. All available data not converted to a numerical score was converted at this time. The scoring of the parent checklists (Appendix D) returned was completed. Seventeen students still did not have a parent checklist, even after trying to reach the families by phone as well as teachers sending reminders home. This was a disappointment.

A meeting was scheduled with the Director of the preschool centers to review the information collected on each child in the six preschool centers. Early childhood educators in both regular and exceptional education reviewed the information on the matrix (Appendix E) for each of the students and were able to look at the overall picture of the students. It became apparent it was indeed valuable to have this composite of information on these students at this early age. There was enough information collected on these students to enable the preschool to better plan the students' education program. The preschools are able to provide experiences that address the deficit areas, and to enhance the students' strengths as well. In addition, this information will be beneficial for the public school in their planning as the students begin their kindergarten year.

The committee reviewed the data collected on the matrix and decided in order for a student to be referred to the gifted program for further testing, he or she must meet the following criteria: average score above 70 on the teacher/parent checklist, stanine score on the ERIN must be five or above, the average stanine score on the Structure of the Intellect Test For Learning and Thinking Skills must be five or above. The only exception to this would be any student who did not speak English as a first language, and who met two of the three requirements.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The number of minorities in the gifted program has always been very low when compared to minority representation in the general school population. The criteria for identification of students for the gifted program needed to be expanded so educators could identify minority students who have the potential to qualify for the gifted program. The goal of this practicum was to develop a methodology increasing the number of minority students recommended for the gifted program, thereby increasing the size of the pool from which minority students can be referred for further evaluation, and which in turn should increase the chances of minority students being placed in the gifted program after their entry into public school.

The increase in the number of minority students initially recommended was to be accomplished by developing a matrix for these students that would be used prior to their entry into kindergarten. The matrix required a collection of data from parents, teachers, and various tests indicating student developmental level, and thinking and learning skills abilities.

The solution strategy required the development of a checklist (Appendix A) for teachers to use for identifying minority students with characteristics of a gifted child. This checklist used examples of characteristics relevant to the minority population. The checklist was presented to teachers and staff at six preschool centers during training sessions conducted by the writer. The teachers then, after returning to their classrooms and over a period of three weeks, filled out the checklists to recommend students. The checklists were then returned to the writer.

The first step was to increase the number of minority students recommended using a teacher checklist. Next, it was hoped the number of teachers and staff referring minority students would increase because of greater teacher awareness of the characteristics that indicate when a child is gifted. Thirdly, it was expected the development of a matrix for identifying minority students for referral to the gifted program would increase the number of students referred when compared to the number of students qualifying for the gifted program based on standard referral procedures.

The teacher workshops introduced the preschool staff to the teacher checklist and provided an opportunity to inform many of the teachers of the characteristics of gifted students. The number of minorities recommended during the practicum period was sixty five students compared to forty-eight students recommended during the same time period last year. The number of minority students recommended increased by seventeen.

The number of teachers referring students through the teacher checklist increased from fourteen teachers last year to twenty eight teachers during the practicum period. The number of teachers referring students increased by fourteen.

In Figure 1 the number of minority students referred during the practicum period, based on the matrix, was forty one. The number of minority students referred using standard referral procedures, that is the Slosson Screening Test, last year was three. Therefore, the number of students referred to the gifted program for further evaluation increased by thirty eight.

In addition, as noted in Figure 1 the number of minority preschool students referred to the gifted program last year was only a small portion of those students recommended by their preschool teachers. This year, of the sixty five students recommended by teachers using the matrix, forty one qualified for referral to the gifted program. Thus, a substantial number of those students recommended by the preschool

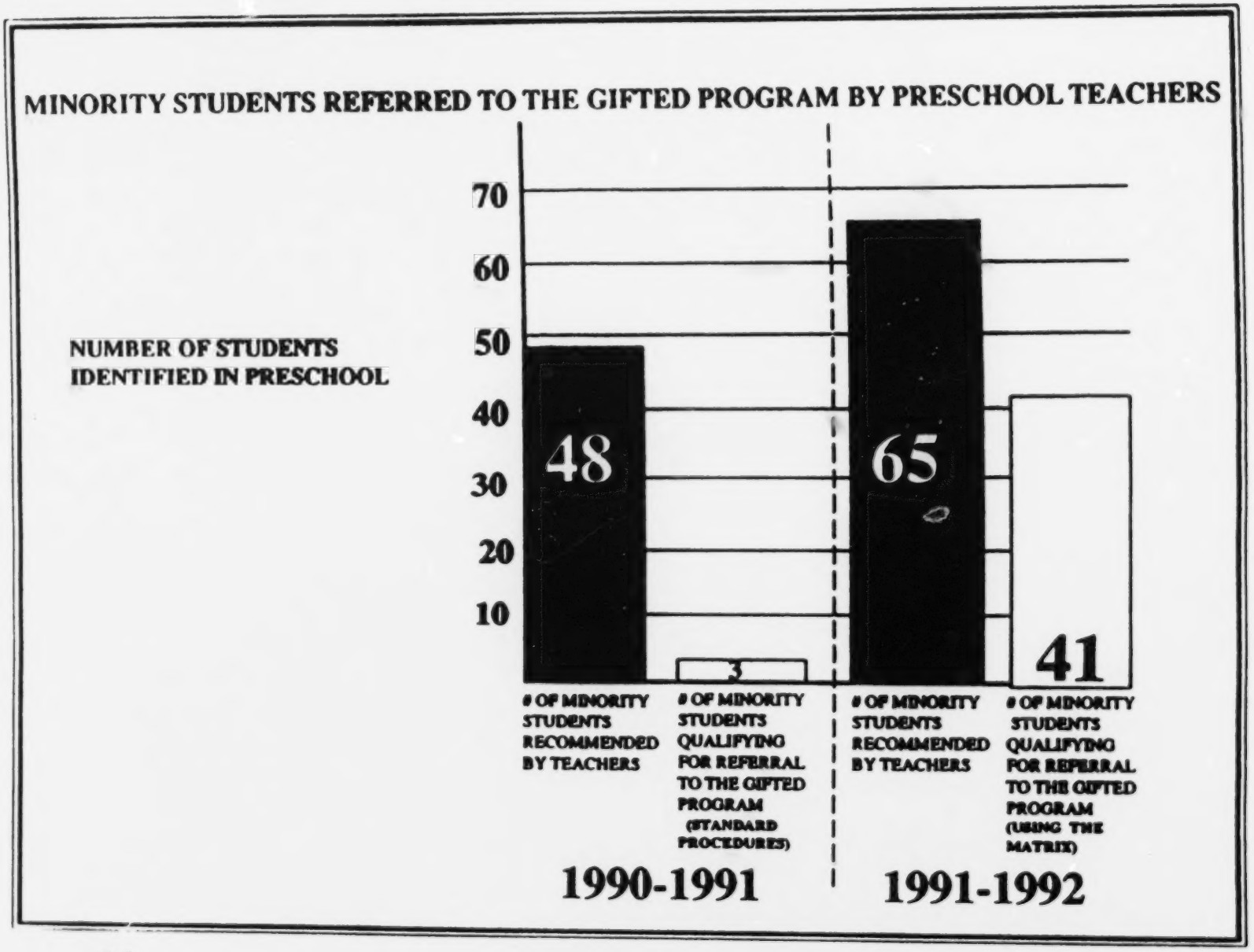

MINORITY STUDENTS REFERRED TO THE GIFTED PROGRAM BY PRESCHOOL TEACHERS
NUMBER OF STUDENTS IDENTIFIED IN PRESCHOOL
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
48
3
65
41
OF MINORITY STUDENTS RECOMMENDED BY TEACHERS
OF MINORITY STUDENTS QUALIFYING FOR REFERRAL TO THE GIFTED PROGRAM (STANDARD PROCEDURES)
OF MINORITY STUDENTS RECOMMENDED BY TEACHERS
OF MINORITY STUDENTS QUALIFYING FOR REFERRAL TO THE GIFTED PROGRAM (USING THE MATRIX)
1990-1991
1991-1992

Figure 1

teachers qualified for referral to the gifted program because of the additional information provided in the matrix (Appendix E).

Discussion

The training sessions for twenty eight teachers in the six preschool programs serving a total of 519 four year old students, recommended sixty five students from their teacher checklists or slightly over 12% percent of the students. Each of the twenty eight teachers attending the training sessions recommended at least one student from their class as potentially gifted. The training session provided a greater awareness of the need to identify minority students at an early age and how to recommend these students using the teacher checklist. The session included various teaching strategies to encourage all students in the classroom to improve their thinking skills, leadership and creative abilities. The training sessions also provided an opportunity for more preschool sites to participate in the effort to identify students from a larger geographical area. The fourteen teachers recommending students the previous school year were from just two large preschools with a total of eighteen teachers. Each teacher last year recommended at least two students per class. The decrease in the number of students recommended this year by the fourteen teachers could be attributed to the make up of the class, the design of the teacher checklist and /or to improved ability to identify students because of the teachers training session. The number of teachers recommending students doubled, which meets one of the anticipated outcomes of the practicum. In addition, it was decided to include teachers of three year olds at the session the writer conducted, in this way the teachers could encourage the same skills with the three year olds. This would help provide input for the teachers working with these students next year.

The increase in the number of minority students recommended by the preschool teachers increased from forty-eight to sixty five. As awareness of the characteristics of gifted students in this population increased, there was an increase in the number of students referred. Whereas only two preschool centers recommended students during

the previous year, the four additional centers increased their referral from zero to between four and nine students.

Prior to the development of a matrix, students could only be referred for evaluation for the gifted program by a screening instrument which had high emphasis on verbal skills. The matrix (Appendix E) developed as part of this study provided the opportunity to take into account additional information about students which had not previously been used for identification purposes. The following data was included in the matrix: teacher checklist, parent checklist, Meeker Structure of the Intellect Testing For Learning and Thinking Skills (SOI), and the Early Recognition Intervention Network (ERIN).

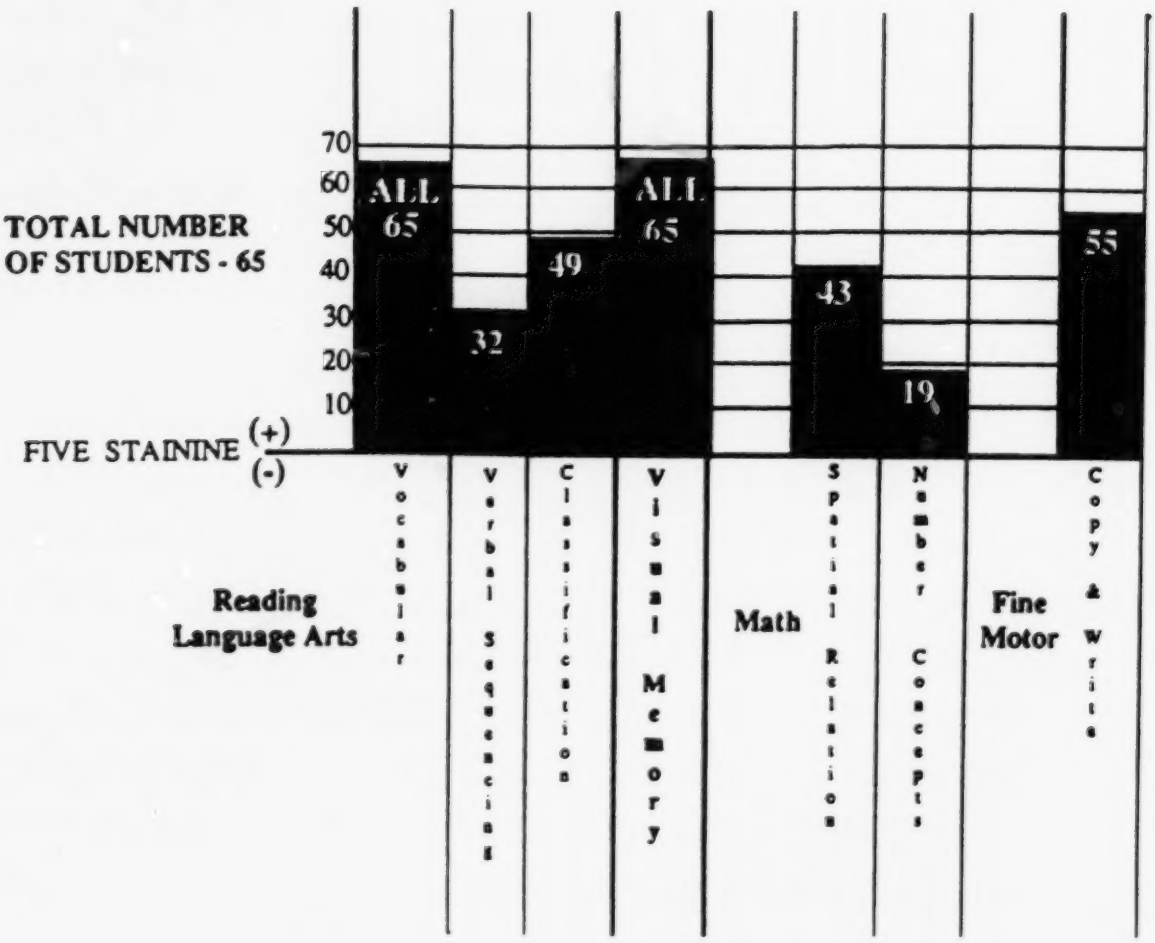
The data in the teacher checklist (Appendix C) was converted to a numerical score. The characteristics checked under the "often" column were given five points, under the "sometimes" column three points, and the "seldom" column one point. The sum of the totals of each column combined for one score for the teacher checklist.

The parent checklist (Appendix D) information requirements were identical to the teacher checklist. The scoring of the checklist was also the same. The sum of the totals of each column combined for one score for the parent checklist. The two checklists were then averaged for one score. If a student did not have a returned parent checklist only the score from the teacher checklist of seventy or above was used. In this way the student was not penalized for failure of parent to return their checklist.

The ERIN Screening is an individual evaluation of the developmental level of the student. The screening score was converted to a stanine according to a chart in the ERIN Manual using the total score on the screening and the birth date of the student to convert to a stanine. This evaluation was administered to all of the students in the preschool centers participating in this writer's practicum.

The SOI Test was administered to each student who was referred with a teacher checklist. The testing results in Figure 2 indicate the strengths and weaknesses in the

Testing Results of Meeker Structure of the Intellect
Screening For Learning and Thinking Abilities
1991-92



area of learning skills. The learning skills are then grouped according to categories of skills needed for reading and language, math, memory and fine motor. For example, the skills needed for reading and language are classification, vocabulary and verbal sequencing. Visual memory is a separate category applicable to both reading and math ability. The skills needed for math are spatial relations and number concepts. In addition, fine motor skills for copying and writing are needed in both reading and math.

The testing results indicated these students are very strong visual spatial learners. Therefore, instruction should always be visual, in addition, emphasis on hands on activities through out the curriculum would provide students with successful learning experiences. The low number of students scoring five or above in the area of verbal sequencing indicated pragmatic language experience should be provided to improve auditory skills. If students were placed in a classroom in which most of the instruction was auditory, there could be difficulty in meeting with success in the classroom setting. The low number of students with a stanine of five or above in number concepts indicated the need to provide more instruction in working with manipulatives to provide experiences in working with numbers.

The data collected on each student (Appendix E) was reviewed by the committee of early childhood educators, the administrator of the gifted program and able learners programs, and the writer. The following criteria for selection of students for referral for the gifted program was selected: average score on the teacher/parent checklist must be 70 or above, a stanine of five or above on the ERIN screening, a stanine average of five or above on the subtests of the SOI Test for Learning and Thinking. Forty one of the sixty-five students qualified for referral to the gifted program using the matrix. Therefore, students qualifying for referral to the gifted program was over half of those students referred, which accomplished outcome three.

The writer was well pleased with the solutions to the outcomes selected in this practicum. It was not anticipated but the data collected on these students has been

beneficial in other ways. The results of the SOI testing has brought about adjustments in the preschool curriculum. The math curriculum has been adjusted to include more experiences for students to use math manipulatives to better understand number concepts. In addition, the importance of language has been enhanced in the curriculum. Directors in the preschool programs are encouraging the infusion of enriched language experiences through out the school day. Not only are they now placing emphasis on the student responses, but also on the teacher modeling appropriate language through out the school day. The writer has been asked to do additional training sessions in order to encourage teachers to become more confident in both the math and language areas. The public school working with a large preschool system administered by a separate agency has brought about an improvement in the communication between the two bureaucracies. By working together the two agencies can develop programs that can make for more successful students from the minority populations.

Recommendations

Five recommendations seem appropriate at this time. Individual contact with the families by a family worker in the preschool agency would probably increase the number of parent responses for the the checklists as well as answer any questions or concerns.

Second, more time should be allowed for collecting the data for the matrix. It was very time consuming to collect information and make arrangements to administer individual testing to sixty five students.

Third, the importance of the input from the committee could not be over emphasized. For the initial development of the matrix it was a wise decision to limit the information collected because of the limitation of staff members to collect the data. Their opinions throughout the practicum implementation were invaluable.

Fourth, it is very important to increase the parent involvement. There was a real need to help parents access community resources as well as how to help and support their children at home to increase their success in school.

Fifth, parent involvement workshops with an emphasis on enrichment should be a continuous part of the support to the minority families.

Dissemination

The preschool agency has invited the writer to present the practicum at their national conference in San Diego, California (Appendix F) in April of 1992. In addition, other school districts have requested information on this project to implement in their districts.

The writer has used the information gained in the practicum to develop the idea of providing a continuum of services for the minority population throughout their education in the district. This has been presented to the administrators in the upper level of the district. A positive response has been received. In addition, this information has been presented to a district minority advisory committee. This committee would like to support an effort to provide summer programs for these students. Judging from the response so far, the information gained from this practicum can have a benefit to minority students for years to come.

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Appendix A
Teacher Checklist

TEACHER CHECKLIST

Tell us about _____
(student's name)

34

LEARNING

	HARDLY EVER	SOMETIMES	OFTEN
1. Asks a lot of questions.			
2. Thinks a while before answering.			
3. Tries to solve problems and figure things out.			
4. Has many ideas and has a lot to say.			
5. Is interested in many things.			
6. Learns faster than others and is sometimes even bored.			

IMAGINATION

1. Likes to make new things- and/or tell stories.			
2. Does not mind being different from everyone else.			
3. Comes up with many ideas.			
4. Does not mind working by himself or herself.			
5. Can solve problems in different ways.			
6. Likes to pretend.			

LEADERSHIP

1. Likes to play with other children.			
2. Is sometimes bossy.			
3. Likes to help others.			
4. Can make good choices.			
5. Is picked by other children as a friend.			
6. Likes to be in school.			

Appendix B
Parent Checklist

PARENT CHECKLIST

School Center _____

Teacher _____

Classroom _____

Tell us about your child _____

LEARNING

	HARDLY EVER	SOMETIMES	OFTEN
1. Asks a lot of questions.			
2. Thinks a while before answering.			
3. Tries to solve problems and figure things out.			
4. Has many ideas and has a lot to say.			
5. Is interested in many things.			
6. Learns faster than others and is sometimes even bored.			

IMAGINATION

1. Likes to make new things- and/or tell stories.			
2. Does not mind being different from everyone else.			
3. Comes up with many ideas.			
4. Does not mind working by himself or herself.			
5. Can solve problems in different ways.			
6. Likes to pretend.			

LEADERSHIP

1. Likes to play with other children.			
2. Is sometimes bossy.			
3. Likes to help others.			
4. Can make good choices.			
5. Is picked by other children as a friend.			
6. Likes to be in school.			

Appendix C
Teacher Checklist with Points

TEACHER CHECKLIST

Tell us about _____
(student's name)

LEARNING

	1 HARDLY EVER	3 SOMETIMES	5 OFTEN
1. Asks a lot of questions.			
2. Thinks a while before answering.			
3. Tries to solve problems and figure things out.			
4. Has many ideas and has a lot to say.			
5. Is interested in many things.			
6. Learns faster than others and is sometimes even bored.			

IMAGINATION

1. Likes to make new things- and/or tell stories.			
2. Does not mind being different from everyone else.			
3. Comes up with many ideas.			
4. Does not mind working by himself or herself.			
5. Can solve problems in different ways.			
6. Likes to pretend.			

LEADERSHIP

1. Likes to play with other children.			
2. Is sometimes bossy.			
3. Likes to help others.			
4. Can make good choices.			
5. Is picked by other children as a friend.			
6. Likes to be in school.			

Total Points _____

Appendix D
Parent Checklist with Scoring

PARENT CHECKLIST
TEACHER SCORING SHEET

Name _____ 40

LEARNING

MY CHILD		1 HARDLY EVER	3 SOMETIMES	5 OFTEN
1.	Asks a lot of questions.			
2.	Thinks a while before answering.			
3.	Tries to solve problems and figure things out.			
4.	Has many ideas and has a lot to say.			
5.	Is interested in many things.			
6.	Learns faster than others and is sometimes even bored.			

IMAGINATION

1.	Likes to make new things and/or tells stories.			
2.	Does not mind being different from everyone else.			
3.	Comes up with many ideas.			
4.	Does not mind working by himself or herself.			
5.	Can solve problems in different ways.			
6.	Likes to pretend.			

LEADERSHIP

1.	Likes to play with other children.			
2.	Is sometimes bossy.			
3.	Likes to help others.			
4.	Can make good choices.			
5.	Is picked by other children as a friend.			
6.	Likes to be in school.			

TOTAL POINTS _____

Appendix E
Matrix

Monitoring Situations For Referral To the Gifted Program 1998

Studentid	Birth/D	Tglsr Ck Ld	Pgsum Ck	Arsr/Ck	Wrdr sum	Classfn	Vocabry	Vertdfns	Visuo/Dsn	Sharlock	RavenCrD	Copy/Writ	StoolopsA	
A2	2/3/87	88	82	88	8	8	8	1	8	8	2	8	8	1
A3	9/10/86	73	74	74	3	8	7	1	8	8	3	8	8	0
A4	12/19/86	74	76	76	3	3	8	8	8	8	3	8	8	0
A5	1/31/87	88		8	3	8	8	2	8	4	3	8	8	0
A6	4/8/87	88	88	74	8	7	7	7	8	8	4	8	7	0
A8	8/16/87	88	78	78	8	8	7	6	8	7	4	8	7	0
A9	8/7/87	82	74	88	8	4	8	4	8	8	2	8	5	0
A10	9/23/86	78	72	76	7	8	8	2	8	4	3	8	8	0
A11	3/21/87	72	74	73	8	8	7	8	8	1	2	8	5	0
A12	8/31/87	80	74	77	8	8	8	8	8	8	4	8	7	0
A13	8/14/87	58	88	78	8	8	8	4	8	4	2	7	5	0
A14	4/4/87	78	76	77	7	7	7	8	8	4	8	8	8	0
A15	2/24/87	58	72	81	8	8	7	2	8	8	2	8	8	0
A16	8/30/86	68	58	84	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	7	8	0
A17	10/6/86	88	77	78	7	8	8	4	8	4	3	8	8	0
A18	12/31/86	88		8	4	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	7	0
A19	9/23/86	81	88	85	7	8	7	2	8	8	3	8	7	0
A20	7/23/87	72	88	81	7	7	8	4	8	4	2	8	8	0
A21	2/4/87	87	86	82	8	4	8	8	8	8	3	4	5	0
A22	12/30/86	84	76	88	8	3	8	3	8	8	8	8	6	0
A23	4/2/87	78	78	78	8	8	7	1	8	7	8	8	7	0
A24	8/16/87	88	8	8	8	3	7	4	8	3	3	7	5	0
A25	10/25/86	85	84	78	4	3	7	5	8	7	8	8	8	0
A26	12/26/86	74	87	71	7	8	8	8	8	8	4	8	8	0
A27	2/24/87	84	78	88	8	8	7	8	8	8	2	8	8	0
A28	1/3/87	88	8	8	8	8	7	8	8	8	8	8	7	0
A29	11/25/86	78	85	71	4	3	7	4	8	5	4	5	5	0
A30	11/26/86	82	88	78	7	8	7	8	8	1	3	8	8	0
A31	11/28/86	84	8	8	7	8	8	8	8	8	3	7	8	0
A32	9/27/86	82	88	78	8	7	7	4	8	4	3	8	8	0
A33	3/1/87	82	8	8	8	7	8	8	8	4	4	7	8	0
A34	12/13/86	82	87	78	3	8	7	4	8	8	3	8	8	0
A35	11/15/86	88	88	74	4	7	7	2	8	8	8	8	8	0
A36	1/8/87	86	88	78	7	7	8	8	8	4	7	8	7	0
A37	10/21/86	84	86	85	8	4	7	8	8	4	4	8	8	0
A38	12/15/86	86	8	8	4	8	8	4	8	8	8	8	8	0
A39	12/1/86	82	73	78	8	3	7	8	8	8	4	8	8	0
A40	7/27/87	32	8	8	8	8	8	4	7	4	2	3	4	0
A41	8/21/87	71	8	8	8	8	8	8	7	8	8	8	8	0
A42	10/10/86	86	74	88	8	8	7	7	8	8	8	8	7	0
A43	2/25/87	88		8	8	8	8	2	8	4	2	8	5	0
A44	2/20/87	81	78	85	8	8	8	4	8	8	4	4	8	0
A45	7/14/87	74		8	8	7	8	4	8	8	3	4	8	0
A46	4/22/87	73		8	8	4	8	4	8	4	1	8	5	0
A47	6/26/87	88	74	77	7	8	8	8	8	8	2	3	5	0
A48	4/29/87	84	78	77	8	7	7	4	8	8	3	8	7	0

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Identifying Minorities For Referral To the Gifted Program 1992

Student#		TchrChkLi	ParentCK		SpMthsyrs	Cipscalfa	Vocablry	VerbSeq	VisperMSE	SpatialR	NumberCO	Copy/WRI	StanineA	
A50	10/21/86	82	88	85	6	7	5	4	8	5	4	7	6	0
A51	2/20/87	70	70	70	7	7	7	2	8	4	5	8	6	1
A52	12/8/86	88		0	6	8	7	1	8	4	3	6	5	0
A53	12/20/86	74		0	8	4	7	5	8	6	6	8	6	1
A54	2/24/87	72	71	72	8	6	5	1	8	7	3	7	5	1
A55	3/6/87	76	74	76	7	8	7	5	8	6	3	6	6	1
A56	5/24/87	68		0	6	1	4	4	7	4	2	2	3	0
A57	2/20/87	78	80	79	7	7	8	3	8	4	2	7	6	1
A58	4/17/87	73	80	77	6	5	8	5	8	8	5	8	7	1
A59	11/6/86	80	80	78	4	6	8	5	6	6	4	7	6	0
A60	4/7/87	74		0	8	8	8	5	8	5	5	7	7	1
A61	12/7/86	72	64	68	3	7	6	6	8	5	3	3	6	0
A62	10/6/86	90	74	82	7	8	8	5	8	5	3	8	7	1
A63	9/18/86	84		0	8	8	7	1	8	4	5	8	6	1
A64	11/21/86	72	82	77	6	8	7	5	8	5	2	2	5	1
A65	10/2/86	80	76	78	7	3	6	2	8	7	3	8	6	1
A66	8/18/87	88	84	76	8	7	8	5	8	4	3	4	6	1
A67	7/27/87	66	72	69	8	3	7	1	7	5	4	5	5	0

1 = meets criteria for referral to gifted program
0 = does not meet criteria for referral to gifted program
65 = Total number of students teachers referred
41 = Students meet criteria for referral to gifted program

Appendix F
Letter from National Head Start Association

National Head Start Association
201 North Union Street Suite 320
Alexandria Virginia 22314
703-739-0875 Fax 703-739-0878

February 10, 1992

President's Office
130 N. Maury Street
Mailing Address
P.O. Box 158
dy Springs, MS 39838
601-252-1582
Fax 601-252-7253

Board of Directors

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Rev. Landrum Shields
Arvada Schumacher
Carol Sinclair
Evelyn Y. Taylor
Joann Wagner
Dengela Watson
Kay Weatherford
Anna Wisdom

Executive Director
Sarah M. Greene

Ms. Brenda G. George
Project Manager
We Can Too II
Pinellas County Schools
301 4th Street, S.W.
Largo, FL 34640

Dear Ms. George:

The National Head Start Association's local conference committee gratefully acknowledges your presentation submissions. We are pleased to inform you that your workshop titles have been selected for presentation during the 19th National Head Start Association's Annual Training Conference, to be held April 29-May 2, 1992, at the Town and Country Convention Center, San Diego, California.

Your workshops are scheduled on the following dates and times. If you are presenting with others, please provide them with this information.

Title: Project We Can Too II
Date: Thursday, April 30, 1992
Time: 2:00-4:00PM
Room: Mesa Room Capacity (65)
Place: Town and Country Convention Center

National Head Start Association will not provide or assume the cost of audio visual equipment or duplicate workshop handouts, you must duplicate your handouts prior to coming to the conference. If you require audio visual equipment, please complete the enclosed audio visual order form and send it to: Meeting Services, Inc., Town and Country Hotel, 500 Hotel Circle, San Diego, CA, 92108 - 619-291-8770.

If you require additional information, please do not hesitate to call me at (703) 739-0875.

Sincerely,

ısing Information

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